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"THE MISTLETOE"

BOOK OF POEMS

BY

LELAH HARRISON BROWN

Author of "THE GOLDENROD"



Ev. E. Carreras, Printer and Binder, St. Louis.



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INTRODUCTION



LELAH HARRISON BROWN, author of these poems, was born in Richmond, Va. She is the oldest daughter of the late Captain Charles H. Brown and great granddaughter of Job Wragg, of Manchester, England, also granddaughter of John Wragg, of Mobile, Ala.

In presenting these poems to the public, it is the author's wish that they will prove more successful than any of the other poems that have heretofore been published, owing to their entire newness and variance dealing with human nature as it appeals to each and every individual as they enter into the great arena of life struggling for existence.



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MISTLETOE

Mistletoe, Mistletoe,
In the wintertide,
Through the dreary woods are seen
Brightest wreaths so green.

Died at The Portal.

This poem is an extract taken from an incident which occurred in St. Louis about three years ago. A laborer named Henry Smidt was arrested on the charge of stealing a loaf of bread from a nearby bakery. He was once a prosperous stonecutter, earning good wages, when suddenly the hand of sickness visited him, stealing from him little by little until he was forced to give up his work. The money he had saved through his hard earnings gradually dwindled down until the last mite was consumed, and above all, his health was a total wreck, it had vanished. No money and no friends, he started on the streets asking for a few mouthfuls of bread, not one responded, door after door and street after street, till the poor creature was starving with hunger. Seeing a bakery with her piles of hot bread, almost breaking the counter, he asked again, hoping this time he would be relieved. No, growled the woman, we have nothing for you. Turning his eyes to the bread, he thought the woman was gone, and he grabbed hold of a fresh loaf, thinking no one saw him. No sooner had he turned the corner when two policemen arrested him, a poor starving creature. He was sent to the work-

house. Traveling so long upon his feet all day with nothing to eat, his entire physical body gave way, and raising his weary eyes as they opened the door of the workhouse, he fainted. The sight was too horrible for a dying man to enter and he died at the portal.

Man to man is just as ferocious
As any beast on earth,
When e're he sees a poor, weak creature
There he goes for all he's worth.

In a city, strong and prosperous,
From the wealth of London's bank,
Dare disgrace the name of Jehova
For their selfish, worldly rank.

Would to God that they were sinking,
Sinking where they could not rise,
How they'd cry for the world to save them,
Pleading, begging for their lives.

If I couldn't catch a live man,
Chain and bring him down to jail,
I certainly wouldn't capture the starving,
And the dying I'd let go free.

* * * * *

I.

The sun rose o'er the city
In the glory of its might,
Not a soul to tell the story
In its broad, stupendous light.

II.

And the city, rapt in splendor,
In her dazzling wealth and pride,
Could not hear the voice of anguish
When it mingled at her side.

III.

Could not see its own pedestrian,
Its own human blood akin,
Stricken down to grave destruction
By an overpowering sin.

IV.

Forced upon the streets to wonder.
Sick and dying on the way,
Only asking for that portion
That sustains this frame of clay.

V.

Yet the sea of dismal faces
Frowned upon him more and more,
Like a mass of angry billows
Lashed against a dreary shore.

VI.

While the heavens roll'd on in splendor,
Clouded in a world of light,
Why hath God and man forsaken him
In this hour? Oh, wretched night.

VII.

Asking, asking, still was asking
For a crust of bread, once more
Forced to beg and forced to wonder
Through the streets, from door to door.

VIII.

"No—o-o-o," Like peals of thunder
Flashed upon him o'er and o'er.
"No—o-o-o," Till the very heavens sounded,
Trembling 'neath its awful roar.

IX.

And the story yet unfinished
For the night will soon be here,
When no longer day affords us
Time for one regretful tear.

X.

And they seized him ere he journeyed
Great policeman bold and strong,
Chained and bound, a dying creature,
Dragged him, jerked him, all along.

XI.

Then the portal widely opened
Of that grim old musty cell,
Where no sunlight ever ventured,
Blacker than the haunts of hell.

XII.

And the crowds that followed after
No one dared to interfere,
For the law, a piece of monarchy,
Firmly held the silent tear.

XIII.

Yet, the last hope dawned upon him
Like some meteor from afar,
Flashed across that stony pathway,
Like the twinkling of a star.

XIV.

And the feeble step was shortened
By that unseen Power on High
Who had witnessed his befallen
In that hour, passed not by.

XV.

Aye, He called him ere he faltered
To that glorious Portal Fair,
Where no fetters wait to bind him
And no policeman walketh there.

XVI.

Where his people from all ages
From all sin and care set free,
Ne'er shall tread the streets with hunger,
Happy and fore'er shall be.

Tell Me Little Birdie.

Tell me little birdie
Why are you so gay,
Twittering, singing
All the summer day,
Up above the tree-tops,
Diving in the air,
Joyous little songsters,
Flying everywhere.

See him in the meadows
Hopping on the grass,
And the children gather
See him when they pass,
Oh the merry creatures
Fill the world with song,
Twittering, singing
All the summer long.

Warning.

Beware, I say,
She's watching you—
Those dreamy eyes so
Deep and blue.

They'll catch you unawares.

She sees the drift of how
You act,
You may not know it
Is a fact.

Those eyes are everywhere.

A glance or two
Those eyes bespell
The fathomless depths
That human tell.

That flash upon the outward view.

Wicked, saintly or untrue,
A scepter may be thine to
Choose

And still those eyes are
Watching you.

A Lesson.

Whoever hath taught me a lesson
Hath taught me a lesson to learn,
For I've pondered it over and over
These eyes can never discern.
I've seen the white winged Angel,
I've heard the lowly reply
Who have struggled and struggled together,
Till at last, they wish they might die.
And what is this mystical valley,
This mystical frame of the dust
That plants his foot on the living
For the sake of his own little lust.

So great is he of his riches
That some day he'll throw them aside
And take to a different pathway
Where the soul will ever abide.

And I pity the poor little creature
That he cannot stay here alway
To dwell in this flowery valley
Good enough for a skeptic to stay.

Stars and Stripes.

Float out abroad ye Stars and Stripes,
Float out above the sea,
Thy spangling gems of liberty
That wave upon the breeze.

Who signals for thy country
A monarch in his might
That spread upon thy battle ship
In the moon-light, clear and bright.

Who wave to every foreigner,
To every creed alike!
Who bears the sturdy mariner, and
Over every pike!

Who'll help to build her cities,
A betterment retain
Is the standard of America
From every rolling plain.

Then let us sing of Stars and Stripes,
Fit emblem of the day,
That cherish every noble act
And ope' for her the way.

What Is Woman.

Woman is a christian science—
A science that never tells—
How bad a pain, how dark a cloud,
How distressing or how loud.
She has a smile for every tear—
A hope for every storm—
A word for every sad mistake
That human life partake.
She's born and bred for higher thoughts
Than on this life depend,
A base as well as ornament
That higher courts ascend.
And so we look to womanhood
For wisdom's ways divine,
More glittering than diamonds shine
Her character sublime.

The Table and the Chair.

I.

By the side of the table there leans a chair,
Which many a home has treasured,
From the humble cot to the palace wall,
How many a space has measured.

II.

Here sits the man who crowns him king
And others sitting master
Who followed every glass of wine
And others coming after.

III.

Ho, ho, says he for the boys in blue
They are my warm companions,
I hate those democratic heirs
They are strong as an eagle's talons.

IV.

He laughs and drafts his many bills
Inclined to be most partial,
He knows that yearning hearts abide
Dying to be court-martial.

V.

Or some other city run
Whose salaries fly to millions,
Not for glory's humble son,
But the man of many trillions.

VI.

And here they argue where to run
Around this wooden table
They cast their votes, they don't know why,
Their minds are so unstable.

VII.

And every time a party stirs,
Whether large or democratic,
The same old song of hard up times
And o'er the world a panic.

The Trunk.

I'm tossed on the wagon,
Jerked and hauled,
Packed and tumbled about,
Down to the sidewalk,
Into the house,
I never find time to pout.
For I crowd every car, and
Fill the big boat,
Rolling and packing you see,
And I sometimes stay home
When I can't go abroad,
Quite happy and content I be.

Yes, I go with the traveler,
The poor and the rich,
I keep a straight track of him,
I carry his garments, though
In need of a stitch
For he loves me, the dear little soul.
I've been left in the dark
With nothing to talk,
Packed away in the baggage car;
And oh, what a shriek, when
I heard them say
I've come for the trunk to-day.
I never grow tired of moving around,
'Tis grand to be rolling about,
Delighted I am to slide to the door
And hear the old woman shout.
So I travel by land and I travel by sea,
Accompanying the great and the small,
How I hear the words of the wicked who
swear,
Unmerciful they let me fall.
But after all, I'm a good little trunk,
Rolling and tumbling about,
Handled by the wise, handled by the fool,
I never have time to pout.

The Children.

Do you hear the children
Shouting while at play,
Romping through the schoolyard
With a heart so gay?
Hear their merry laughter
Ringing through the air,
Roguish little youngster
Climbing everywhere.

Have they not a sorrow,
Have they not a pain,
Only some little maiden
Trying it again?

And I see them playing
Shall it always last,
Romping through the schoolyard
Forgetful of the past.

No it will be ended,
Cloudy years will roll,
Snatching childhood's vision
Even of the soul.

Chilling hearts once tender
In the wicked world,
Fighting through life's journey
Over tempest hurled.

And the once bright faces
Now are dim with tears,
Faint recall their school days
Of forgotten years.

In the great reality
Piling thick and fast,
Like a mighty mountain
Crushing them at last.

And the bitter trials
Could they've known before,
When they romped the school yard
In the long ago.

To A Friend.

If you were rich and I were poor,
I'd have no burden at my door,
Nor entertain a sullen fear
How it was you came so near,
Fortune only smiled at you
If you were rich and I were poor.
If you were rich and I were poor
I'd praise you for and wish you more,
For the energy you have given
And if no weary hearts have riven,
The place on earth you well deserve
If you were rich and I were poor.
If you were rich and I were poor,
I still would strive to reach that shore,
Bearing all with patient care
Still with others I would share
And my humble toil resume,
If you were rich and I were poor.
If you were rich and I were poor,
And never cared to see me more,
I'd bear no malice in my heart,
Far into the avenues of life apart,
Nature itself can speak to me,
If you were rich and I were poor.

There's Sunshine Now.

I.

There's sunshine now, the clouds have roll'd
away,
No lingering shadow on the walls portray,
And through the open door there steals
A flood of light that heaven reveals.

II.

He's gone,—that wretched vision of the past,—
That seem no end—more like to last,—
Yet in the midst of sea and tide
I see them cross on the other side.

III.

And who can tell where in the heart hath said
There is no light, even hopes are dead;
When thus betwixt a moment's time,
A light arose in grandeur, all sublime.

IV.

And why not rest from this unruly past,
With upward sails and hidden mast;
For every hour is worth the while,
For each renewal of a happy smile.

My Mother's Flower Vase.

It was my mother's flower vase,
A treasure rich and rare,
That decks the mantel's favorite place,
It has no equal there.
Its broken edges touched by time
Across the ancient face,
Where moulded flowerets cease to climb
Some gilded leaves I trace.
The flowers that it used to hold
My mother's face I see,
Fair visions rise among the gold,
The dearest gift to me.
The scented leaves, the sweet perfume,
A grief I never knew,
Until I peeped into her room
To find them such a few.

And though the flowers I have none
Like the flowers my mother had,
Its sacredness for me has won
A spot that makes me glad.
And when I look upon that vase,
That ancient fair design,
No higher price that I can place
Than just to call it mine.

When You Have Money.

I.

When you have money, no matter where you go,
Kind hearts will gladden you at the door;
But how you got it, it matters not,
When you have money.

II.

When you have money, the world is always near
To praise you with their ringing cheer;
For all the good you are to them,
When you have money.

III.

When you have money, then friendship itself is
strong,
Too good to drag along
For you are great and very great,
When you have money.

IV.

When you have money, a power that always
rules,
Down in this world of many schools,
Who will never learn to see the truth,
Unless with money.

The Great Ambition.

WARNING.

He told me not to go into the great ambition
of a youthful soul,
Where incense burn and fires aglow, where
hundreds of her stars unfold;
Their innocence and sacred trust,
Holding out to mortal dust,
A thing unsought, unknown by name,
Only as it went it came.

HE WENT.

A dreary aspect all around,
A sickening gust that cannot calm,
A long lost seed that sometimes find,
Its wieldy weight up on the ground
Then sinks into a deeper mire,
Than all the metals shaped with fire,
An agonizing grewsome toil,
As long as life remains her spoil.

EXPERIENCE.

And after all the goal we reach,
After many a weary lesson teach,
That life was not then what we thought,
The object of ambition wrought,
And not to sail the glassy sea,
A hallowed creature all to be,
But that this life was made for strife,
E'er to reach eternal life

CONCLUSION.

And now to waste this precious time
Or bow to this unholy shrine,
Or ask for that which cannot give
The soul's eternal peace within.
For after all our aims have won
What have we when this life is done,
A rest from earth's continual strain,
Wherein ambition sought to gain.

The Minister.

I.

"There's nothing for you," the minister said,
As he visited the home of a widow one day,
"There's nothing for you" and he looked all around
As if quite a mantel of dust he found.

II.

The widow, whose heart had already been crushed,
Had suffered through many a want of support,
But thought that a minister's words would be kind
Far above the numerous faults to find.

III

For Sabbath after Sabbath he had preached the
Word,
That faith without works were all unheard
And fully persuaded the people to stand
And be willing to lend him a helping hand.

IV.

But, ah! when he came to her humble door,
Where were the proverbs so wonderfully told?
Gone,—into the great cavern of night,
Whence there falleth no beautiful light.

V.

And sadder the words as he drawled them out,
That the outside world knew nothing about,
For the outside world had sped no gloom
Over this desolate widowhood.

VI.

And the sermons he preached and the visits he
made
Were as far from the heart as an idle tale,
For there were no such practice of faith and good
works,
But of the man who forever shirks.

Look for the Beautiful.

I.

Look for the beautiful, be not dismayed,
When surroundings are doubtful and hopes
have decayed,
Look for the beautiful, you'll find it alway
Shining somewhere through shadows each day.

II.

Look for the beautiful, in the ugly you'll see,
A charm more truthful than beauty can be,
A grace more tender, a heart more brave,
Than an ill-fated vessel upon a storm-tossed
wave.

III.

Look for the beautiful, she smiles everywhere,
She gleams from the frightful as well as the fair,
She hides from the scorner who dares to confess
That he sees a bright corner for every distress.

IV.

And contentment is beauty, and beauty content,
If we aim for our duty there's less to relent,
For all that is beautiful, all that is rare,
If we look we shall find it surpassingly fair.

My Garden.

I.

Fenced in by narrow pickets tall,
My own little garden best of all.
A wondrous spot so fair.
I look around, the sweet perfume
Of many roses in full bloom.
A fragrance rich and rare.

II.

The hyacinths, the laughing pinks,
Bursting forth when no one thinks,
In brilliant hues unfold.
Their petals wear a rosy red
Among the other flowers that tread,
A beauty to behold.

III.

And over there the lillies tall,
Peeping out from against the wall
In robes of white.
And other beds afar I see,
Sweet violets seem to hide from me
Clear out of sight.

IV.

The humming birds from far and near
Hover around my flowers dear,
Throughout the day.
They steal along the rose-leaf vine,
And sip the sweets so rich and fine,
And flee away.

V.

No artist can impose a sketch
Of this my garden's humble stretch,
Of blooming flowers.
With all there falls the morning dew
Shining bright the summer through.
A trail of bowers.

War.

I.

Is this the way you tories work upon the battle
field?
Before a flashing bayonet thy smitten subjects
yield.
O'er waters and canyons, oh, hear we not the call,
From every troop commanding, a monarch
over all.

II.

They reel and sink in battle,
They hear the piercing cry,
The tingling of death's rattle
Along the solemn tread.

III.

Oh, hasten to battle,
A conflict ne'er shall end,
Till the last foe is vanquished,
A power to defend.

IV.

Till the last word is uttered
And silence prevails,
Storm after Tempest
The country thus assails.

Golden Rod.

I.

Golden rod, golden rod, blooming everywhere,
In the silent breezes nod, shining, oh, so fair,
 In the glowing meadow are seen
 O'er shady hills of green,
Golden rod, golden rod, blooming everywhere.

II.

Golden rod, golden rod, in the quiet vale,
Over every turn of sod, skipping through the dale,
 In the little stalks are seen
 Peeping from the leaves so green.
Golden rod, golden rod, over every vale.

III.

Golden rod, golden rod, blooming for us all,
Over every turn of sod, be it e'er so small,
 Even for the great and wise
 Like a diamond from the skies.
Golden rod, golden rod, be it e'er so small.

England.

I.

Down with barbarity
 For vengeance is not hers,
The prowling strength the scepters yield,
 When prince of scepters flee.

II.

Thy boasted sails and sullen craft
 Hath sailed the angry sea,
And shout aloud for selfish greed
 Beyond immensity.

III.

O'er every field and province
 She e'er has lent a hand,
To satisfy her hunger
 And gratify the land.

IV.

Whose thirst knows no quenching,
Afire with selfish greed,
Ye tories of old England,
Where is her noble seed?

V.

Gone through the ages,
Centuries have grown,
And no more that energy
In thy sons have sown.

VI.

Peace is thy standard
And silence thy might;
Quiet old England
Shall never more fight.

A Gentleman.

We all know a gentleman when we see one,
He doesn't have to tell us he is there
With all the chivalry of a monster rare.
Like some proud mountain looks aloft,
O'er small crevices of earth apart
From the foundation of his heart.

Who Couldn't Get Married?

I.

Who couldn't get married, to be an old slave,
Up the hill down the hill, down to the grave.
Who couldn't get married, to be a fair bride,
A rib of old Adam, to walk by his side.

II.

Who couldn't get married, for the sake of a home,
A dutiful couple never to roam,
Who couldn't get married, for better or for worse,
Who couldn't get married with a big fat purse.

III.

Who couldn't get married, or who couldn't be
sweet,

Who couldn't get married, a pleasure to seek,
Who couldn't get married or who couldn't be
loved,

Who couldn't be happy outside of a glove.

IV.

Then to get married is not to be blest,

And to be loved is not to find rest,

Out of one trouble into another,

Maring one life and blessing some other.

The Two Paths or A Walk in Life.

I.

SMOOTH PATH.

Oh, will you go to yonder dell,

Across the wooded plain,

Across a bashful rivulet

Winding through the lane.

Where the lovers love to dwell

How they love and love so well,

Oh, will you go when all is clear,

No darkness seemeth near?

II.

ROUGH PATH.

Oh, will you go when the path is drear,

When clouds arise with midnight fear,

Where billows dash and tempest roar

And wintry blasts sweep o'er and o'er.

Isn't that enough for a soul so frail,

Lost upon an icicled slippery sail,

Lost from the once bright beacon light

That led its way to the port in sight.

III.

Enough, enough, I cannot go
Through wintry paths of ice and snow,
I pray thee give me a smoother lane
Quite free from every cross and pain;
A flowery path I much prefer,
If you will kindly lead me, sir.

IV.

Not so my child, the angel cried,
Not one of my subjects on earth can hide
They all must traverse the same dark lane,
Whether it be stony or filled with pain,
If you not willing the path to tread,
You'll not be following where the Savior led.

V.

For over the desert dark and cold,
The prophets have traversed in the days of old,
And the speaker arose, when she heard him say—
With a tear in her eye, she went her way.

The Earth.

Every day the earth rolls round
With the same old valleys and hills,
With the same old sun and stars by night,
With the same old rapture fills.
With the same old clouds, with the same old skies,
With the same old fountains flow,
With the same old song that the tune inspires,
With the quaint old summer morn.
And the fearful sound of the ocean roll,
And the beast of the forest roar,
And the trembling earth from her bowels heave,
And blast o'er her dreary shore.

And storm after storm under the same old clouds,
In the same old earth abound.

Oh, who would not tire from its grievous pain
Or shudder to hear its sound.

And the same old toil under the same old yoke,
And the same old troubles foil,
And the same old tears, with the same old smiles
Perish as the earth rolls on.

And over the glistening snow I see
The same weary footprints stamp,
With the same old tales and many times told
Out on the icy bank.

And the same old world rolls around every day,
With the same old battles of life.
With the same weary souls, in the same old strife,
With the same old day and night.

Easter.

I.

'Twas Easter, o'er a world of light,
Arose a queen from fairy-land
Making every heart so bright
That shook her jeweled hand.
As if there were no piercing gloom,
But all the earth was full in bloom.

II.

"What?" sighed a woman, looking around,
Amid the gay and bright,
Not one was found
Clad in robes of night.
And while the bells were ringing gay,
People assembled in the church to pray.

III.

"Am I alone?" she sighed?

"In sorrow all alone."

And the more she cried

All, all is gone.

And there she sat and sobbed in grief,

But the Easter chimes brought no relief.

IV.

"Can I be joyous this Easter Day?"

"You can," the queen replied.

"Fairest how can I pray,

My husband has just died."

And the organ began its loud refrain,

Repeating the glorious Easter strain.

V.

"How can I be joyous," she sobbed again?

Pray tell me, thou fairy queen,

"Who ruleth the starry plain,

Death thou hast never seen."

And over the church the fairy flew,

Blending with music and happy too.

VI.

"'Tis nothing, 'tis nothing," she said,

"We've all had our sorrows and tears,

Christ is alive who once was dead,

And to Him we carry all our fears."

So the chimes still rang from the organ loft,

Rendering her music low and soft.

VII.

"'Tis all a mockery," she said,
"Not the fairy, but the woman in black,
Since I know my husband is dead
My life is a miserable rack."
And she paid no heed to the Easter chime
That floated above her, their joyous
chime.

This Wonderful Age.

I

'Tis a wonderful age we are living in
An age of wonderful skill,
Where progress has reached her zenith.
When the world seems to have had her fill.

II.

Too fast for the slow and clever,
Too slow for the swift flying bird,
Who makes his money by the millions
And makes it all in a word!

III.

No time has he to consider
Whether there be modesty or vice,
But rather, more time to ponder
Over rivals and bribery for gold.

IV.

Get some old poster of a woman
Half stooped in a symmetrical form,
To the world she's a dazzling beauty
To lend such a magical charm.

V.

If it takes such beauties to brighten
The hearts of this electric age,
Impure, immodest and disgraceful,
It's certainly a wonderful stage.

VI.

Who hangs out their license of marriage
That the world may read it and know,
That the great ambition has outrivaled
Her sisters of centuries ago.

VII.

Who cared not even to mention,
Yet were true to the day of their death?
Too slow for this age and too modest
Where everything's done at a breath.

VIII.

No time to be lost in searching
For wisdom, knowledge and truth,
This swift, fly age has no conscience
Too old, for the proverbs of youth.

IX.

No matter how bold and impertinent
So long as the dollars display,
Even in God's holy sanctuary
Where they come to worship and pray.

X.

Where they sing, smooth over and cover,
And say not a word to disclose
These immodest attires of women,
Everywhere in the streets and doors.

XI.

That flourish on pages of literature,
And scorn at the modest and pure,
The old time women are too backward,
Their manners and ways are absurd.

XII.

Of course, they belong to the smart set,
Who cannot take time and wait;
Yes, wait for the men to come after them,
But they go after the men.

XIII.

And no wonder there's no great heros,
And haven't the least bit of respect
For women who serve as their posters,
Whose models have a poor effect.

XIV.

There they roll and tumble together,
Too fast for the sayings of old,
Too swift for the modest and truthful
When their souls are raving for gold.

XV.

And they die in their sins every minute
With heartaches and longing for more,
Their greed has become uncontrollable.
They are lost from the eternal shore.

XVI.

Then help us Lord to remember
That while we are raving for more,
Help us not to forget our characters
To have them spotless and pure.

Varied Thoughts.

Women are styled posters, men are made to
admire,
The world is made to hold them and to pass
them by.
Of all the world there's none like the summer
flowers that grow
The sparkling gems that twinkle so,
In starry crowns above. They talk to earth in
silence
Breath out their filial love behind her light
secreted is God's own light above.



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